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4-H CLUBS



What Are 4-H Clubs?

They are groups of young people in urban, suburban, small town, and rural areas who carry on a wide variety of educational projects in civic and community service, in farming, homemaking, personal improvement, and other activities. Character development and good citizenship are long-range goals.

Any boy or girl between 9 and 19 years old may join by agreeing to follow 4-H ideals. The main requirement is a willingness to "learn by doing," which is the club slogan, and to "make the best better," which is the club motto. The four "H's" stand for "head," "heart," "hands," and "health," which are emphasized in the program.

By 1964, 4-H Clubs numbered about 94,800 in all 50 States and Puerto Rico, and had more than 2,190,200 members. Represented are all backgrounds and levels of living. Since its beginnings in the early 1900's, 4-H has helped about 23 million young men and women who have participated in its program.

What Do 4-H Members Do?

They carry projects which are useful tools for providing valuable learning experiences. The number of projects 4-H'ers may choose from ranges from

a couple of dozen in some States to about a hundred in others. Some of the most popular are: Citizenship and leadership development; foods and nutrition; health and fitness; making, selecting, and caring for clothing; home management; home furnishings; home grounds beautification; recreation leadership; electric; agronomy; forestry; wildlife; and nature study.

In urban and suburban communities where 4-H is spreading, fast-gaining projects include automotive care and safety, career exploration, money management, meal planning and preparation, child care, good grooming, personality improvement, creative crafts, dog husbandry, horsemanship, and entomology.

Who Conducts 4-H Work?

The 4-H program is a part of the national educational system of cooperative extension work which the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State land-grant colleges and universities, and the counties share. The Federal Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives national leadership and the State extension services give State leadership to the program. Two important groups helping to further the program are the National 4-H Service Committee, 59 East Van Buren Street, Chicago, Ill., 60600, and the National 4-H Club Foundation, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C., 20015. The Foundation has headquarters in the National 4-H Center which was opened in 1959.

Each partner on the team has individual duties and follows a clear-cut pattern of working for 4-H. All join to help club members make the most of their talents and abilities, train for worthwhile occupa-

Some 4-H Activities—



tions, serve better in their communities, and achieve a satisfying way of life.

How Do 4-H Clubs Function?

As in the democracy in which they live, 4-H'ers largely run their own clubs, elect officers, help plan and hold meetings, and select projects. Each club drafts its programs to suit its members and the localities in which they live.

To guide 4-H'ers, about 362,400 youth-minded men and women—mostly parents—serve as unpaid volunteer local leaders. Nearly 131,000 older club members aid as junior leaders. They are trained, counseled, and assisted by county agents, backed by the vast stores of scientific knowledge in the State land-grant colleges and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Leaders advise and encourage 4-H'ers in planning and carrying out projects. They attend meetings, visit members to observe progress of projects, and offer suggestions where needed.

Program emphasis is continually updated to meet changing needs of youth. For example, thinking in recent years has shifted from "How to grow plants" to "How do plants grow?"

Where Do Friends of 4-H Serve?

County, district, and State council groups are active in many areas to help plan and conduct various phases of 4-H Club work. Such groups add vitality to the program. They provide a chance for many interested and qualified persons to share in shaping the course and extending the values of 4-H.

Each year significant support is given by numerous firms, organizations, and individuals at local,



State, and national levels. Public-spirited donors generously provide project incentives and awards, leader training materials, staff specialty advisers, and other assistance that aid and challenge 4-H'ers and leaders to greater achievement.

What Are 4-H Aims?

Ten objectives are used by cooperative extension workers and volunteer leaders to aid 4-H members in analyzing their goals, needs, and interests. These point the way to building programs that prepare young people for better living—physically, mentally, and spiritually. They are to:

1. Gain knowledge, skills, and qualities for a happy home life.
2. Enjoy useful work, responsibility, and satisfaction in accomplishment.
3. Value research and learn scientific methods of decision-making and problem-solving.
4. Know how scientific agriculture and home economics relate to our economy.
5. Explore career opportunities and continue needed education.
6. Appreciate nature, understand conservation, and use resources wisely.
7. Foster healthful living, purposeful recreation, and constructive leisure.
8. Strengthen personal standards and philosophies.
9. Acquire traits, attitudes, and understanding to work well with others.
10. Develop leadership talents and abilities to become better citizens.



When Were 4-H Clubs Founded?

4-H Club work grew out of a situation and a need in rural America. It had its roots in many places, and many persons guided the movement in its formative years. At about the turn of the century, in several different localities, agricultural leaders began discovering that one of the best ways to get scientific methods used on farms and in homes was to start with youth. So rural young people were encouraged to center their learn-by-doing activities on improved agriculture. Corn, pig, tomato, and canning clubs were forerunners of 4-H.

Between 1901 and 1905 interested leaders of these and other groups began to talk over their common aims and gradually set up general patterns for organization and activity. In 1914 Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act which provided for cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, including "boys' and girls' club work." This law also established the system of Federal funds to be matched by the States and counties as the basis of financial support for the cooperative educational program.

What Are the Emblem and Pledge?

The National 4-H emblem, adopted in 1927, is a four-leaf clover with a letter "H" on each leaf. Club colors are green and white. The white background on the 4-H flag symbolizes purity; the green of the emblem represents nature's most common color, and is also symbolic of youth, life, and growth.



The national pledge reads:

I pledge—

*My Head to clearer thinking,
My Heart to greater loyalty,
My Hands to larger service,
My Health to better living, for my club,
my community, and my country.*

How Widespread Are 4-H Clubs?

The 4-H Club idea now circles the globe. About 75 countries, in widely separated areas of the world, have adopted all or part of the plan and adapted it to their own needs and conditions. The movement in some places is identified as 4-H Clubs and uses the familiar green four-leaf clover emblem. Elsewhere the local adaptation makes the program peculiarly individual, and "4-S," "5-V," and other designations are common.

Many people in distant lands have learned about 4-H Club work and the high ideals of American youth by getting a firsthand acquaintance through the International Farm Youth Exchange, now in its 17th year. This is a real two-way exchange because, through it, young people here go to other countries and young people of other lands come here to live, work, and share experiences for several months with American families.

Outbound "IFYE's" in the past 16 years total 1,546 from 47 States and Puerto Rico; the inbound number 1,750 from 67 countries. More than 25,000 families at home and abroad have served as hosts. IFYE has helped provide a model for the Peace Corps, and cooperates with the program in a variety of ways.

Wherever they are, 4-H Club members strive for better family cooperation, better community living, better citizenship, and better world understanding.

More Information on 4-H Club Work—

may be obtained from county extension offices, usually in county seats. Other sources are the Cooperative Extension Service of any State land-grant college, and the Federal Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250.

Cooperative Extension Work: United States Department of Agriculture and State Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Cooperating.

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